

**ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to a novel class of sulfonamides which are aspartyl protease inhibitors. In one  
5 embodiment, this invention relates to a novel class of HIV  
aspartyl protease inhibitors characterized by specific  
structural and physicochemical features. This invention  
also relates to pharmaceutical compositions comprising these  
compounds. The compounds and pharmaceutical compositions of  
10 this invention are particularly well suited for inhibiting  
HIV-1 and HIV-2 protease activity and consequently, may be  
advantageously used as anti-viral agents against the HIV-1  
and HIV-2 viruses. This invention also relates to methods  
for inhibiting the activity of HIV aspartyl protease using  
15 the compounds of this invention and methods for screening  
compounds for anti-HIV activity.